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Zero Retries is an independent newsletter promoting technological innovation that is occurring in Amateur Radio, and Amateur Radio as (literally) a license to experiment with and learn about radio technology. Radios are computers - with antennas! Now in its fourth year of publication, with 2600+ subscribers.

About Zero Retries

Steve Stroh N8GNJ, Editor

Web version of this issue - https://www.zeroretries.org/p/zero-retries-0197

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Request To Send

Commentary by Editor Steve Stroh N8GNJ

Paid Subscribers Update

My thanks to **Prefers to Remain Anonymous 26** for *renewing* as an **Annual Paid Subscriber** to Zero Retries this past week!

My thanks to **Prefers to Remain Anonymous 70** for *upgrading* from a free subscriber to Zero Retries to an **Annual Paid Subscriber** this past week!

Financial support from Zero Retries readers is a significant vote of support for the continued publication of Zero Retries.

# # #

It Was Another *Week*…

Thanks to those of you who reached out and checked in with me when Zero Retries didn't arrive, at all, on its usual Friday afternoon / evening (US time) schedule. It was nice to be checked in on.

For me, it was a bit of a week, as you'll read below. The best part of my week, besides seeing our daughter, son-in-law, and grandcats was an all-too-brief visit with an old friend. From our respective busy schedules, we were able to get together for a day and evening together. Our discussions were interactive and high-bandwidth in the way only a face-to-face conversation in person can be. My friend generously listened to my stories about the nearly four years of writing Zero Retries, the kind-of-accidental foray into creating Zero Retries as a business, and now the Zero Retries Digital Conference(s). From the deep perspective of my friend's life, career, and early involvement with me in a previous venture, my friend offered some incredibly valuable perspective and well-considered suggestions. I will be taking those suggestions to heart to make changes and improvements in Zero Retries, to make room in my life, schedule, and priorities for other projects that I really want to accomplish with the same passion and energy… and available time with which I created Zero Retries nearly four years ago.

Some of those future projects relate to Amateur Radio, some are in other areas of interest to me. One future project will allow my friend and I to collaborate again, which I am very much looking forward to.

And of course, there are the GNU Radio Conference (GRCon) 2025 and Zero Retries Digital Conference 2025 to plan for, which will intensify the demands on my (and Tina's) time as those dates get closer. So this new perspective now, was particularly welcome.

Another high point of this week was a welcome and very significant development in the IP400 Network Project that merits a detailed story, so that will have to wait for the next issue.

~~Kind of a~~ Plan for Migrating Zero Retries

I (think…) I first told this story in **Zero Retries 0003** in Request To Send:

> Sometime this past June, I casually read an article by Kevin Kelly called 99

> Additional Bits of Unsolicited Advice. I'm confident you'll find much wisdom in it, as I did. But as I read through the various bits of unsolicited advice, this one "bit" was *really* profound:
>
> ***If your goal does not have a schedule, it is a dream.***
>
> There are moments when you encounter things that sear your soul, and that one seemingly innocuous bit of unsolicited advice seared mine. Just copying and pasting it into this story, it still leaps out at me. The moment I read it, it was instantly clear to me that I hadn't yet launched Zero Retries because ***I didn't have a schedule*****!** I had not *committed* to actually *launching* Zero Retries.

I *kind-of* had a schedule for migrating Zero Retries off the Substack platform, but it was a vaguely defined goal… aka… a dream. That vaguely defined earlier goal was to publish Zero Retries beginning in 2025 on a platform other than Substack. That is easier said than done because of the subtle niceties of a platform that you understand, and are familiar and productive with, versus the steep learning curve of a new platform.

So, new schedule (goal) for Zero Retries:

Beginning its fifth year of publication, (2025-07-11) Zero Retries will publish only on a new platform.

In the weeks prior to that, I'll begin simultaneously publishing on a new platform (details to be announced) and continue on Substack. This will reduce the self-induced pressure to continue producing Zero Retries, and allow me a learning curve to get up to speed and get familiar and productive with the new platform.

# # #

Hamvention 2025, *Ho!*

In only five weeks, I will be attending Hamvention 2025, USA on 2025-05-16 through 18 in Xenia, Ohio.

A few notes for Zero Retries readers that will also be attending Hamvention 2025:

- I am grateful to Hamvention for granting me media access to Hamvention, which will enable me to get access to the event outside of public hours. That will make having conversations with Zero Retries Interesting vendors a lot more useful (to them and me) to not have to compete with the public who want to chat about buying products, which understandably is a priority. I plan to attend Hamvention 2025 on Thursday, 2025-05-15, and arrive early on the other days for that purpose. I'll be reaching out to a few Zero Retries Interesting vendors to try to arrange interviews, but I'd be grateful for suggestions of Hamvention 2025 vendors (including flea market vendors) that you think I should check out.

- TAPR has announced the speaker for the annual TAPR / AMSAT banquet:
Plans for the 17th annual AMSAT/TAPR Banquet on Friday, May Phil Karn, KA9Q, will

be the banquet speaker. Check the TAPR (www.tapr.org) or AMSAT (www.amsat.org) websites for updates and ticket information.
I plan to attend this event as I'm an unabashed fanboy of KA9Q because of his long history of technological innovation in Amateur Radio, most recently with ka9q-radio. To date, neither TAPR nor AMSAT have posted "ticket information" so it may be a last minute scramble to secure a ticket.

- There are a few "must attend" Zero Retries Interesting seminars:
    - APRS - State of the Union
    - HF Digital Modes
    - ARISS: Celebrating 25 Years of Continuous Operations on ISS…
- I *may* be able to "hang out" in an inside vendor booth so allow chatting with Zero Retries fans, and promoting the IP400 Network Project. That hasn't been finalized, so I can't offer details quite yet.

If you're also attending Hamvention 2025, look for the blue Zero Retries ball cap bobbing around above the crowd about 6'3".

# # #

Have a great weekend, all of you co-conspirators in Zero Retries Interesting Amateur Radio activities!

Steve N8GNJ

Leave a comment

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Image courtesy of US Federal Communications Commission

My Comments to FCC on GN Docket 25-133

By Steve Stroh N8GNJ

It is in my nature, especially as I have developed my writing skills in writing Zero Retries, to dive deep in an attempt to provide thorough context to a subject that I try to explain. I've been both complimented on such writing, and told that such writing is TL;DR (Too Long; Didn't Read).

This tendency sometimes works to my disadvantage, as it has in the past few weeks leading up to the FCC's deadline of Friday April 11, 2025 for submission of comments to the FCC regarding GN Docket No. 25-133 - IN RE: DELETE, DELETE, DELETE. For too long, I felt that this moment to comment to the FCC about substantive changes in Amateur Radio would be a unique moment. Perhaps it would be the only such moment in this decade, and thus Amateur Radio, and I, should "seize the moment".

With the potential of this being a unique opportunity, I dove deep into the minutiae of Part 97.

Too deep, I later concluded because it's truly a mind-numbing exercise for an individual to follow the "twisty nooks and crannies" of US Federal Government regulations such as Part 97 that have literally accreted over the course of nearly a century since the FCC was created in 1934.

In studying Part 97, I was forced to take frequent breaks (literal headaches from intense study) and after long study, I would write perhaps a paragraph. Earlier this week, looking at what I had written, I concluded that my "point" (quoting a section of Part 97) / "counterpoint" (my recommendation of what to delete, and my justification for doing so) writing was so verbose as to be unreadable, and thus useless.

So, I started over. *But too late*. The rewrite to be more terse and readable, combined with unexpected travel earlier this week, combined to the point where I'm embarrassed that I didn't submit my comments to the FCC within the specified deadline - April 11, 2025.

But I did submit my comments, late, and on Monday we'll see if my comments are accepted (disseminated) as the FCC starts their workweek to catch up on comments (and reply comments - see below) submitted over the weekend. Sometimes the FCC does permit late comments to be disseminated, sometimes they don't.

Thus I've learned this lesson (again…) that meeting deadlines is more important, in the end, than my tendency of writing elegant prose that (I feel) "has to be complete".

I'm not going to attempt to read the other comments filed in FCC GN Docket 25-133 - that's a task for next week's issue of Zero Retries after a (what's left of the weekend) break from writing.

Here are my comments in GN Docket 25-133, as submitted, regarding the Amateur Radio Service:

Steven K Stroh GN Docket 25 133 Comments
173KB · PDF file
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I also commented in GN Docket 25-133 about enabling the use of data and digital modulation in the US Citizens Band Radio Service (CB), Family Radio Service (FRS), General Mobile Radio Service (GMRS), and Multiple Use Radio Service (MURS).

Steven K Stroh GN Docket 25 133 Comments Data On CB Etc
91.9KB · PDF file
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My intent with both comments were to improve the usability of all five services for the "greater good" of all individuals that use these services. But I understand that some of my comments

won't be accepted by others. In the end, my comments were just the opinions of one individual, among many, and I don't expect my comments to be given any more "weight" than any other commenter, other than someone commenting on the Amateur Radio Service that isn't an Amateur Radio Operator. (I've also a user, at one point or another, of CB, FRS, GMRS, and MURS.)

What Comes Next in GN Docket 25-133

Reply Comments on GN Docket 25-133 are due Monday, April 28, 2025

I explain this more completely in a previous issue of Zero Retries (that I couldn't find), but long experience with reading Reply Comments, most of those who file Reply Comments don't necessarily limit their Reply Comments to discuss (previously filed) Comments. Thus, Reply Comments can be pretty much anything. That's not to say that the FCC will give a particular Reply Comment any weight (same as any Comment), but if you have something to say that didn't occur to you in a Comment (or you didn't file a Comment), then you could do so in a Reply Comment.

Leave a comment

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ZR > BEACON

By Steve Stroh N8GNJ

Short mentions of Zero Retries Interesting items.

VarAC V11

> **… With Email gateway, Advanced beacon, image gallery, QSO Log, one-time beacon, Link speed indicator, Auto beacon/frequency scheduler start and much more!**
>
> Hello VarACiers! This is, without a doubt, our biggest release ever! How big? MASSIVE! Normally, we roll out one or two major update with some improvements—but this time, we're bringing you a whole slew of new features. Buckle up, it's going to be a wild ride!
>
> 📣 Introducing: VarAC Email Gateway
>
> Imagine this: Your internet is down, but you need to send a critical email. No problem! You hop on the CF and—BAM!—you spot multiple stations broadcasting in their beacon that they operate an email gateway. You compose a VMail, connect, relay, and receive a confirmation that your email has been delivered.

VarAC is a very nice, well-designed email and chat application that works in conjunction with the VARA (HF and FM) system of fast, robust data modes. VarAC is a primary recommendation to use VARA when it's so easy to communicate via data modes using VarAC.

From my perspective, the VarAC Email Gateway is the primary, *and a highly significant feature of note* to this update to VarAC. It seems to me to enable a *distributed* Amateur Radio to Internet email capability - like Winlink, but without the (need for) centralized server infrastructure of Winlink.

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Zero Retries Boilerplate

The **Zero Retries Store** is now open for business with quality Zero Retries branded merchandise and items being retired from Steve's N8GNJ Labs.

These bits were handcrafted (by a mere human, not an Artificial Intelligence bot) in beautiful Bellingham (The City of Subdued Excitement), Washington, USA, and linked to the Internet via **Starlink *Satellite* Internet Access**.

See the **Zero Retries Boilerplate** page for significant acknowledgements and other information relevant to Zero Retries. For new readers of Zero Retries, that page, and the **About Zero Retries** page has useful information to check out.

My ongoing ***Thanks*** to:
Tina Stroh KD7WSF for, well, *everything!*
Jack Stroh, Late Night Assistant Editor Emeritus
Shreky Stroh, Late Night Assistant Editor In training

***Annual Founding Members* who generously support Zero Retries financially:**
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Founding Member 0001 - Randy Smith WU2S (Renewed 2024)
Founding Member 0002 - Chris Osburn KD7DVD (Renewed 2024)
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Founding Member 0004 - William Arcand W1WRA (Renewed 2024)
Founding Member 0006 - Todd Willey KQ4FID (Renewed 2024)
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Founding Member 0008 - Prefers to Remain Anonymous 14 (Renewed 2024)
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Founding Member 0013 - Newton White N4EWT (New 2025)
Founding Member 0014 - Joe Hamelin W7COM (New 2025)

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You thousands of readers of Zero Retries without which there would be little point in publishing this newsletter.

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